



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/037,457	12/31/2001	Michael T. Morman	KCC 4845 (KC# 16,984)	4817
7590	03/31/2006			EXAMINER
Senniger, Powers, Leavitt & Roedel One Metropolitan Square, 16th Floor St. Louis, MO 63102			REICHLER, KARIN M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3761	

DATE MAILED: 03/31/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.	10/037,457	
Examiner	MORMAN ET AL.	
Karin M. Reichle	Art Unit 3761	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 January 2006.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 45,46,50-68,76-85 and 88-95 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 45,46,50-68,76-85 and 88-95 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. The lengthy specification has not been checked to the extent necessary to determine the presence of all possible minor errors. Applicant's cooperation is requested in correcting any errors of which applicant may become aware in the specification.

For example:

Description

2. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: 1) The Summary of the Invention section, i.e. a description of the claimed invention, and the invention of the claims are not commensurate, see MPEP 608.01(d) and 1302.01. Applicant's remarks with respect to such have been noted. 2) On page 6, lines 15-20, Applicant defines the terminology "affixed" as including both direct and indirect affixing. Therefore, if a portion of a first structure is "affixed" to a second structure, the entire first structure is "affixed" because its entirety is either directly or indirectly joined to the second structure. Therefore, the first structure is either entirely affixed or not affixed at all as "affixed" is defined. Therefore it is unclear how the absorbent body is "affixed", i.e. secured, along "at least a portion" or "at least in part" as claimed in the claims, specifically 66, 68, 88 and 95. Also note page 31, lines 8 et seq of the description. Therefore, a clear consistent description of "affixed" should be set forth throughout the description and claims. See also the Response to Arguments section infra.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. Claims 45-46, 50-68, 76-85 and 88-95 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

As already discussed *supra*, due to the definition of “affixed” and like terms on page 6, and the terminology “at least a portion” or “at least in part” in all the claims, it is unclear what the structure defined by the terminology “affixed” is. See also the Response to Arguments section, *infra*.

Claim Language Interpretation

4. The terminology of the claims is interpreted in light of the definitions set forth on pages 3-8. Due to the lack of clarity with regard to the terminology “affixed”, see discussion *supra*, any amount of affixment will be interpreted as meeting the terms of the claims. It is noted that on page 31, direct surface attachment of between about 25% and 95% has not been patentably distinguished, i.e. described as being critical, from direct surface attachment of less than about 95%.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

6. Claims 45-46, 50-54, 56-65, 88-92 and 95 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Stevens ‘598.

Claim 95: See Figures, especially Figures 3A, and 19A-19C, the stretchable chassis is 12, see claim 4, and the discussion of claims 50-54 infra, an absorbent body 32 which is affixed, directly or indirectly, along a portion of its outer surface to the inner surface of the chassis at 46, 48, and 50, see col. 6, lines 9-24 and 30-35 and the Claim Language Interpretation section supra, and the surface 34 thereof lies against the wearer during use, see Figures. As also discussed infra, Figures 19A-C, as contrasted to, e.g., Figure 15, teach the inner surface of the body being uncovered, note element 12 is the chassis and 42 is the inner surface of the body, and a portion of the chassis being uncovered as now claimed as of 1-12-06. It is the Examiner's first position that the reference teaches the chassis is stretchable independent of the absorbent body, see, e.g., col. 6, lines 13-18 and the structure and function of lines 13-20 as now presented. In any case, the Examiner's second position, the Stevens reference teaches all the claimed structure. Claim 95, lines 15-17 and 19 et seq defines properties, capabilities and function of such claimed structure. Therefore there is sufficient factual basis to conclude such properties, functions and capabilities are also inherently present in the same structure of Stevens. See MPEP 2112.01. As seen in Figures 3A and 19A-19C, the inner surface of the absorbent body is free from contact with the chassis at the longitudinal ends of such body.

Claim 45: see col. 5, lines 23-25.

Claim 46: see points 46, 48 and 50 in Figures.

Claims 50-54: see col. 14, line 15-col. 18, line 19 of Stevens, and thereby Van der Wielen '415 and Morman '802, e.g., col. 27, lines 20-31 of '802, the chassis can be multiple layers of gathered, i.e. extensible, material and elastic material (it is noted that the claims do not limit each of the cover and liner to one layer only), i.e. each of the cover and liner can be a gatherable or

extensible layer or an elastic layer or a combination of at least one extensible layer and one elastic layer and, e.g., Van der Wielen et al '415 at col. 12, lines 12-15, i.e. all the layers of the chassis can be elastic.

Claims 56-58: see also col. 10, lines 45-50 of Stevens.

Claims 59-62: see portions cited with respect to claims 50-54, especially '802 at the paragraph bridging cols. 19-20 and col. 14, line 26-col 16, line 12, and '598 at col. 17, line 33-col. 18, line 1, i.e. the cover can be a polypropylene spunbond gatherable layer laminated with an adhesive or tacky elastic layer of SIS, and col. 10, line 60-col. 14, line 14 of Stevens, i.e. a thermoplastic nonwoven web of multi-block elastomeric copolymers.

Claims 63-65: see col. 5, lines 59-61 and col. 6, lines 1- 8 and col. 1, lines 15-21, and thereby '172 at col. 7, lines 12-16.

Claims 91-92: see col. 1, lines 15-21, and thereby '172, Figures, elements 58 and 60 thereof, and discussion of scope of claim language with respect to claims 93-94 infra which also applies here, i.e. elements 58 and 62 as taught by the prior art lie between a portion of the liner and outer cover. It is noted that the claims do not require the member contacting the outer cover and liner simultaneously. It is also noted that the claims do not require members of specific dimensions. See also discussion in Response to arguments section infra.

Claims 88-90: see discussion of claims 91-92 and 95, supra.

7. Claims 88-90 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Stevens '709.

See Figures, the stretchable chassis is 20, see col. 4, lines 15-31, col. 17, line 10-col. 21, line 14, and thereby Van der Wielen '415 and Morman '802, e.g., col. 27, lines 20-31 of '802,

the chassis can be multiple layers of gathered, i.e. extensible, material and elastic material (it is noted that the claims do not limit each of the cover and liner to one layer only), i.e. each of the cover and liner can be a gatherable or extensible layer or an elastic layer or a combination of at least one extensible layer and one elastic layer and, e.g., Van der Wielen et al '415 at col. 12, lines 12-15, i.e. all the layers of the chassis can be elastic, the absorbent body is 22, i.e. wrapsheet 43, 44, core 38, and absorbent body liner is 42 which is affixed at 50 and/or 45, see col. 7, lines 20-25 and the Claim Language Interpretation section supra, and the surface 42 thereof lies against the wearer during use, see Figures. See also elements 58 and 62 which lie between a portion of the liner and outer cover. It is noted that the claims do not require the member contacting the outer cover and liner simultaneously. See also discussion in Response to arguments section infra. Also, with regard to lines 15-16 of claim 88, it is the Examiner's first position that the reference teaches the chassis is stretchable independent of the absorbent body, see, e.g., col. 7, lines 5-7 and 20-25 and col. 4, lines 32-48. In any case, the Examiner's second position, the Stevens reference teaches all the claimed structure. Claim 88, lines 14-15 define properties, capabilities and function of such claimed structure. Therefore there is sufficient factual basis to conclude such properties, functions and capabilities are also inherently present in the same structure of Stevens. See MPEP 2112.01.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

9. Claims 66-68, 76-85, and 93-94 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stevens '598 in view of Vogt '638 and Bishop et al '166.

Claims 66-68, 77-83, 85 and 93-94: The Stevens device includes all the claimed structure, see discussion supra, except for a surge layer and its location. See, e.g., col. 1, lines 7-9 and col. 3, lines 31-32 of Stevens, i.e. desires containment of fluids, i.e. prevention of leakage. See also element 78 in the Figures of Vogt which is a surge layer and col. 3, lines 12-36 of Bishop. To employ a surge layer and one in the claimed location as taught by Vogt and Bishop on the Stevens device would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of the recognition that such would aid in the containment of fluids/prevention of leakage and the desirability of such by Stevens.

Claim 76: Applicant claims the chassis liner being a neck stretched spunbond web which Stevens does not teach. However, see col. 19, lines 9-13 of Stevens and col. 7, line 54-col. 8, line 5 and col. 8, lines 21-51 of Vogt, i.e. at the very least teaches a resiliently stretchable cover or chassis can be either a stretch-bonded laminate or a laminate in which the inner layer is a neck-stretched spunbond web. Therefore to make the resiliently stretchable stretchbonded laminate of the chassis or cover of Stevens a cover or chassis of a elastic laminate in which the inner layer is a neck stretched spun bond web would be obvious in view of the interchangability as taught by Vogt.

Claim 84: It is noted that the terminology "low stretch" is relative absent claiming of specific dimensions of stretchability and thereby, at least one of the materials of the absorbent body is considered "low stretch material".

10. Claim 55 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stevens '598 as applied to claim 50, and further in view of Vogt '638.

Applicant claims the chassis liner being a neck stretched spunbond web which Stevens does not teach. However, see col. 19, lines 9-13 of Stevens and col. 7, line 54-col. 8, line 5 and col. 8, lines 21-51 of Vogt, i.e. at the very least teaches a resiliently stretchable cover or chassis can be either a stretch-bonded laminate or a laminate in which the inner layer is a neck-stretched spunbond web. Therefore to make the resiliently stretchable stretchbonded laminate of the chassis or cover of Stevens a cover or chassis of a elastic laminate in which the inner layer is a neck stretched spun bond web would be obvious in view of the interchangability as taught by Vogt.

Response to Arguments

11. Applicant's arguments with respect to the terminology "affixed" which are substantially the same as those presented in previous responses have again been considered but are still deemed not persuasive for the reasons set forth supra and those set forth in paragraph 12 of the last Office Action. Applicant's arguments with respect to the prior art rejections have been considered but are either deemed moot in that the rejection has not been repeated or is deemed narrower than the claim language and/or teachings of the prior art. For example, contrary to Applicant's arguments Figures 19A-19C doe not show the inner surface covered, i.e. Applicant should note the outer cover or chassis 12 is not folded over the inner surface as argued, contrast to Figure 15. For a second example, with regard to claim 88, Applicants arguments are

narrower than the claim language which does not precluded folding over and/or the teachings of '172 incorporated by the prior art.

Conclusion

12. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any new grounds of rejection were necessitated by the amendments to claims 66, 88-89, and 91-95.

13. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Karin M. Reichle whose telephone number is (571) 272-4936. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tanya Zalukaeva can be reached on (571) 272-1115. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Karin M. Reichle
Karin M. Reichle
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3761

KMR
March 28, 2006